

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-17, 21 and 26 have been canceled.

Claims 18, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29 and 30 have been amended for clarification of the invention. The following terms have been amended: "slurry product" has been amended to "slurry composition"; "staged oxidation product" has been amended to "staged oxidation composition", "crude carboxylic acid slurry" has been amended to "crude carboxylic acid slurry composition", and "purified carboxylic acid slurry" has been amended to "purified carboxylic acid slurry composition". An additional limitation has been added in that the staged oxidation is conducted at a temperature from about 190°C to about 280°C. Support for this limitation can be found on page 10 lines 16-20 of applicants' disclosure.

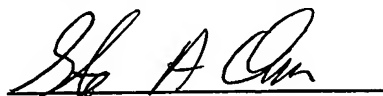
Claims 20 and 31 have been amended for clarification purposes, support for these amendments can be found on pages 8 lines 21-23 of applicants' disclosure.

New claims 32-39 have been added with the additional step of oxidizing an aromatic feedstock at a temperature of about 110°C to about 200°C in a primary oxidation zone to form a crude carboxylic acid slurry. Support for this additional step can be found of page 7 lines 10-18 of applicants' disclosure.

**Conclusion**

Applicants maintain that the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejection(s), remove all rejections, and pass the application to issuance.

Respectfully submitted,



Steven A. Owen

Patent Agent

Reg. No. 50,355